United Nations S/2013/171

Security Council

Distr.: General
19 March 2013
English
Original: Arabic

Identical letters dated 19 March 2013 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I wish to draw your attention to the following:

We refer to the identical letters from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council, issued as document S/2013/130, alleging that the 1974 Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian forces has been violated by shellfire from the Syrian side.

The letters are a desperate attempt on the part of the Israeli Permanent Representative to distract international attention from Israel's role in destabilizing the area of disengagement by providing numerous forms of support to armed terrorist groups active in the area. Syria is surprised at this attempt to misrepresent an incident which the Syrian side addressed immediately, acting in coordination with United Nations forces and in accordance with its obligations under the Agreement on Disengagement. The United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) notified the Syrian side on 2 March 2013 that three artillery shells had landed to the north-west of United Nations Observation Post No. 58, some 2.25 kilometres east of Kafr Alma and hence some 2.5 kilometres inside occupied Syrian territory. The General Command of the Army and Armed Forces then ordered ground troops to cease firing on the armed terrorist groups, which have repeatedly attacked the area.

The head of protocol and information at UNDOF subsequently informed the Syrian side that UNDOF had evacuated United Nations Observation Post No. 58 as a result of the clashes. After the Syrian law enforcement forces had agreed to cease fire, the armed terrorist groups took control of the observation post. Four days later, they detained 21 members of the Philippines battalion of UNDOF. The Syrian side has exercised the utmost restraint and flexibility, cooperating fully with UNDOF to address the incident. It has done so in order to comply with its obligations under the Agreement and preserve the stability of the area. UNDOF is fully aware that the activity of armed terrorist groups in the area of disengagement hinders the Armed Forces in the exercise of their mandate and jeopardizes the safety and security of its personnel and of the Syrian civilian population that lives in the area.

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The Syrian Arab Republic believes that the threat contained in the letter from the Israeli Permanent Representative is a vain attempt to obfuscate the fundamental issue, which is that the Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan must be brought to an end, inasmuch as it is a standing violation of the relevant United Nations resolutions and provisions of international law, and that Israel is unquestionably behind the instability of the area of disengagement. It is surely clear by now that Israel's support for armed terrorist groups in the area has serious repercussions. Most recently, it led to the attack on the Philippines battalion of UNDOF. The incident again highlights the responsibility of the Security Council to preserve peace and security in the area of disengagement by prevailing on the States backing the armed terrorist groups to shoulder their responsibilities by refraining from supporting the groups' activities on Syrian territory and, in particular, in the area of disengagement.

I should be grateful if this letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Permanent Representative of
the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations